U.S. Navy Destroyer Detaches from U.K. Carrier Strike Group

After nearly 13 months of training alongside the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group 21, USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) detached from the Strike Group in the Arabian Sea Oct. 19. *THIRD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING / 1st Lt. Zachary Bodner*

LONDON – The USS The Sullivans, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, has departed the U.K. Carrier Strike Group after a five-month contribution to the global deployment, the U.K Ministry of Defence said Oct. 26.

Having worked with the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) for the last 13 months, USS The Sullivans has departed from the group after seven months deployed alongside Royal Navy vessels.

The destroyer and its 280-strong crew have made a significant contribution, both in the pre-deployment exercising off the coast of Scotland last spring and throughout the CSG's deployment since May.

USS The Sullivans played a key role in numerous exercises from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and back, including countries like Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore, as well as NATO. Such exercises develop interoperability between militaries, enhancing regional stability and security.

"The Sullivans' ship's motto says everything about the special relationship between the U.K. and U.S. navies: 'We stick together,'" said Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey. "I'd like to thank all of her ship's company for their outstanding contribution to the Carrier Strike Group deployment."

Commissioned in 1997 and named after the five Sullivans brothers who tragically lost their lives when their ship was sunk in World War II, USS The Sullivans is one of the escort ships providing air defense to aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth during its inaugural global deployment.

“USS The Sullivans have been tremendous representatives of the United States during Carrier Strike Group 21,” said Brig. Gen. Simon Doran, U.S. senior national representative for the CSG. “From the North Sea to the South China Sea, from supporting combat operations in Operation Inherent Resolve to more than a dozen exercises with foreign Navies, the sailors on The Sullivans embodied their ship’s namesake – we stick together.”

In a tangible demonstration of the United Kingdom’s closest defense and security relationship, U.S. involvement in this deployment has significantly contributed to development of the UK carrier strike capability. In June, the UK CSG operated alongside French carrier Charles De Gaulle in a landmark moment for NATO.

“I am immensely proud of every Sailor on The Sullivans for consistently providing an integrated multi-domain capability to Carrier Strike Group 21 in support of HMS Queen Elizabeth’s maiden deployment,” said Cmdr. James R. Diefenderfer Jr., commanding officer of USS The Sullivans. “We gained a tremendous amount of respect for our CSG21 counterparts as we sailed together across the globe demonstrating our shared commitment to uphold freedom of navigation of our seas, and it was impressive to be a part of their seamless integration with many other allies and partners along the way.”

“We could not have operated as well as we did without the genuine support of Commodore Moorhouse, Brig. Gen. Doran, and the ship’s crews and squadron personnel that made up CSG21,” the CO said. “Everyone was exceedingly welcoming every step of the way, and all were true partners in every theatre of

operation going all the way back to our first operation together in the North Sea in the fall of 2020.”

The CSG has covered over 40,000 nautical miles through the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Philippine Sea. The main body of the group is currently visiting India in a powerful demonstration of the U.K.-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

USS The Sullivans will return to national tasking in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean over the coming weeks.

PEO Ships Establishes New Program Office to Focus on U.S. Navy and Foreign Military Sales, Boats & Craft

Sailors aboard expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3) throw a line to Sailors aboard a Mark VI patrol boat attached to Commander, Task Force 56, during refuel training in the Arabian Gulf, July 27. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dawson Roth*

WASHINGTON – Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships stood up their newest program office, U.S. Navy and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Boats and Craft (PMS 300), with a small ceremony Oct 21., said Team Ships public affairs.

PMS 300 was established to ensure programmatic resources are aligned to efficiently and effectively deliver capability to requirements after the current Support Ships, Boats and Craft Program Office (PMS 325) portfolio had grown significantly.

“The creation of this program has further empowered this hard-working team to get things done,” said the PMS 300 program manager, Capt. Eric Felder, “I’m looking forward to working alongside this talented team of acquisition professionals as we navigate the growth of this new program to ensure collaboration and readiness with our domestic and allied partners remains strong.”

PMS 300 will be responsible for commercial-based naval acquisition of craft and boats for the Navy, other Department of Defense and non-DoD customers. There will be three product line divisions, including Foreign Military Sales, Boats and Combatant Craft and Service Craft & Seaborne Targets, which will support all aspects of planning, budgeting, acquisition and life cycle management for boats and craft. Additionally, there will be two support divisions: Business and Financial Management and Integrated Logistics Support.

PMS 325 will be renamed the Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office and will oversee auxiliary ships and special mission ships including the T-AO 205, NGLS, T-ARC(X), T-ATS, T-AGS, NOAA NAV, and T-AGOS(X) class programs.

UMS Skeldar’s V-200 Completes Successful Flight Trials in Finland

The Skeldar V-200, completing flight demonstrations aboard Finland’s OPV Turva. *UMS SKELDAR*

BASEL, Switzerland – UMS Skeldar’s V-200 unmanned helicopter has successfully completed five-day long surveillance flight

trial demonstrations aboard the OPV Turva as part of the Valvonta2 project led by the Finnish Border Guard and funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the company said in a release.

The project aims to achieve an understanding of how authorities could use unmanned aircraft for diverse and demanding operations at sea both now and in future scenarios.

As part of the trials, UMS Skeldar's V-200 completed multiple operational flights and successfully demonstrated a range of features including automatic takeoff and landing (ATOL) capabilities, vessel identification at different ranges and altitudes, search and rescue during day and night, Automatic Identification System and transponder demonstrations. To perform the missions, the Skeldar V-200 was simultaneously carrying a multiple sensor suite of AIS, Wescam MX-8 electro-optical and infrared sensors as well as the high-capacity Leonardo Pico-SAR synthetic aperture radar.

"These flight trials demonstrate that the Skeldar V-200 platform is the perfect fully-developed ATOL choice for maritime missions," said Stefan Hyltberg, program manager for UMS Skeldar. "Its adeptness at operating from a range of naval ships using market-leading heavy-fuel Hirth Engines in combination with its multiple sensor carrying capability give the Skeldar V-200 a real advantage over its competitors. Our team is proud to have its work recognized by the Finnish Border Guard."

The platform of choice for maritime-based missions worldwide, the V-200 has been previously selected by the German, Royal Canadian, Belgian and Royal Netherlands navies, providing embedded "eye in the sky" intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to enhance its capacity to perform primary and secondary missions.

“As we have proven with these trials, the Skeldar V-200 continues to provide best-in-class capabilities for customers,” Hyltberg said “Continuous development of our Skeldar V-200 and V-150 aims to not only validate the platforms’ capabilities but also analyze customer requirements with a view to increasing the service suite UMS Skeldar provides.”

U.S. Navy, JMSDF Conduct Bilateral Operations in South China Sea

U.K. Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08), U.S. Navy Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Izumo-class helicopter destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184) sail together as part of Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) 2021, Oct. 17, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Erin C. Zorich*

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group and JS Kaga (DDH 184) are conducting maritime security operations and exercises, Lt. Cmdr. Miranda Williams, USS Carl Vinson, said in an Oct. 25 release.

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Izumo-class helicopter destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184) and U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 are conducting bilateral operations in the South China Sea for the first time since Vinson Carrier Strike Group (VINCSG) deployed this summer.

While in the South China Sea, Japan and U.S. Navy units are

conducting maritime security operations, to include flight operations, coordinated tactical training between surface and air units, refueling-at-sea evolutions and maritime strike exercises.

Cooperative maritime engagements and U.S. carrier operations in the South China Sea are part of the U.S. Navy's routine presence in the Indo-Pacific.

"Bilateral operations are one key component in our collective maritime readiness," said Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commander, CSG 1. "The Indo-Pacific is a dynamic region and by continuing to conduct routine operations with our allies and partners throughout international waters and airspace, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to upholding international law, on the sea and in the air, and to ensuring that all nations can do the same without fear or contest."

Since arriving in the U.S. 7th Fleet region, CSG 1 units have participated in multiple operations and exercises with JMSDF units, most recently MALABAR 2021 and Maritime Partnership Exercise. JMSDF Rear Adm. IKEUCHI Izuru, Commanding Officer of IPD21 force, Commander of Escort Flotilla 3 said maritime alliances and partnerships are vital to maritime security and underpin the free flow of commerce and access to resources in the region.

"Through a series of large-scale exercises, the JMSDF was able to enhance its tactical capabilities as well as strengthen its cooperative relationship with the navies of participating countries," said Rear Adm. IKEUCHI Izuru, Commanding Officer of IPD21 force, Commander of Escort Flotilla 3. "Our activities in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, which are important international maritime traffic routes, together with the navies of our allies and partners who share our fundamental values and strategic interests, demonstrate our unity and strong will to realize a "free and open Indo-

Pacific” based on law.”

Led by Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, U.S. Navy units operating in the SCS include aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70); Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57) and USS Shiloh (CG 67); Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1; and nine squadrons of embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2.

CVW-2 consists of an F-35C squadron, the “Argonauts” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147; three F/A-18E/F Super Hornet squadrons, the “Bounty Hunters” of VFA-2, the “Stingers” of VFA-113, and the “Golden Dragons” of VFA-192; the “Gauntlets” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 136, operating the EA-18G Growler; the “Black Eagles” of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 113, operating the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye; the “Titans” of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, operating the CMV-22B Osprey; the “Black Knights” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 4, operating the MH-60S Seahawk; and the “Blue Hawks” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78, operating the MH-60R Seahawk.

This marks the second time that a carrier strike group is operating in the South China Sea with the advanced capabilities of the F-35C Lightning II and Navy CMV-22B Osprey.

CSG 1 is deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

USCGC Legare Returns Home from 61-day Counter-Narcotic Deployment

USCGC Legare (WMEC 912) as seen underway for Eastern Pacific patrol in late 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Trevor Hammack*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of USCGC Legare (WMEC 912) returned home Thursday after an eight-week counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South and the Coast Guard 11th District, the Coast Guard 5th District said Oct. 22.

The crew patrolled over 12,650 nautical miles through the heart of the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of Campaign Martillo, working in conjunction with Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration and other partnering nations.

With the assistance of an embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aviation detachment from Jacksonville, Florida, and a two-person Law Enforcement Detachment Team from San Diego, Legare's team was successful in the interdiction of over 1,300 pounds of illegal narcotics worth an estimated street value of more than $24.6 million.

En route to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Legare also stood by to support the Coast Guard's 1st District in the Northeast following hurricane Henri and assisted in transferring two migrants in support of the 7th District in the Southeast.

Cmdr. Malcolm Belt, commanding officer, said, "I'm extremely proud of the Legare crew, and our HITRON aviation detachment for the perseverance demonstrated during this patrol. Despite significant equipment failures and logistics hurdles

experienced this patrol for both our helicopter and the cutter, the crew always rose to the occasion to ensure we stayed mission effective.”

The Legare is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. Also, they allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

Bell Completes First AH-1Z Viper for Bahrain

Bell Textron Inc. celebrated the completion of the first AH-1Z Viper attack helicopter for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Sept. 30. *BELL TEXTRON*

AMARILLO, Texas – Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, celebrated the completion of the first AH-1Z Viper attack helicopter for the Kingdom of Bahrain Sept. 30, the company said in a release.

Bell delivered the first of 12 production aircraft to Naval Air Systems Command as part of the 2019 foreign military sales contract. Foreign military sales of the AH-1Z bring the advanced, dedicated capabilities of the aircraft directly to international operators and help increase interoperability and amplify effectiveness of allied forces. The helicopter will be prepared for shipment to Bahrain with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) before being transported to Bahrain

in 2022.

“This is an extraordinary achievement by the H-1 Program and brings the Royal Bahraini Air Force a step closer to fielding the advanced capabilities of the AH-1Z,” said Mike Deslatte, Bell H-1 vice president and program director. “The men and women of Team Viper, a group of premier suppliers, have done an exceptional job of delivering to the U.S. government, on time and on contract.”

Bell designed the AH-1Z Viper specifically to meet the stringent operational requirements of the U.S. Marine Corps, which focus on full marinization and a reduced logistical footprint. The aircraft has a fully integrated glass cockpit and the ability to carry a wide variety of munitions.

The composite rotor system further enhances the Viper’s ability to provide close air support to ground forces in any environment, while the fully integrated Target Sight System enhances pilots’ capabilities to identify clearly, acquire, track and engage targets beyond maximum weapon range.

“The Viper will provide significant benefits to the Bahrain Defence Force as they modernize their fleet of attack helicopters,” said Deslatte. “Having a proven state-of-the-art platform will help contribute to the security of Bahrain while improving interoperability with U.S. forces.”

Bell continues to work to deliver aircraft to the U.S. Marine Corps, Bahrain and Czech Republic. The company also keeps the H-1 up to date with planned capability improvements designed to ensure the Viper maintains its strategic technological edge throughout its service life.

Navy and Army Demonstrate Advanced Hypersonic Technologies

The Navy Strategic Systems Programs and the Army Hypersonic Program Office successfully conducted a High Operational Tempo for Hypersonics flight campaign Oct. 20. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The Navy Strategic Systems Programs (SSP) and the Army Hypersonic Program Office (AHPO) successfully conducted a High Operational Tempo for Hypersonics flight campaign Oct. 20, the SSP said Oct. 21.

This flight campaign was executed by Sandia National Laboratories from the NASA Wallops Flight Facility. This test will be used to inform the development of the Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) and the Army's Long Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) offensive hypersonic strike capability.

This test demonstrated advanced hypersonic technologies, capabilities, and prototype systems in a realistic operating environment. Three precision sounding rocket launches were conducted containing hypersonic experiments from partners, including CPS, AHPO, the Joint Hypersonic Transition Office, Sandia, Johns Hopkins University/Applied Physics Laboratory, MITRE, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and several defense contractors.

During weapon system development, precision sounding rocket launches fill a critical gap between ground testing and full system flight testing. These launches allow for frequent and regular flight-testing opportunities to support rapid maturation of offensive and defensive hypersonic technologies.

This test is a vital step in the development of a Navy-designed common hypersonic missile, consisting of a Common Hypersonic Glide Body (CHGB) and booster, which will be fielded by both the Navy and Army with individual weapon systems and launchers tailored for launch from sea or land. The Department of Defense successfully tested the CHGB on March 20, 2020. The Navy and Army will continue to work in close collaboration to leverage joint testing opportunities.

Delivering hypersonic weapons is one of the DoD's highest priorities. Hypersonic weapons, capable of flying at speeds greater than five times the speed of sound (Mach 5), are highly maneuverable and operate at varying altitudes. The DoD is working in collaboration with industry, government national laboratories, and academia to field hypersonic warfighting capability in the early-to mid-2020s.

The Army and Navy routinely share data with Missile Defense Agency that supports its work on hypersonic defenses.

Bollinger Shipyards Delivers 46th FRC Ahead of Schedule Despite Hurricane Ida Hit

Coast Guard Fast Response Cutter John Scheurman, delivered a week ahead of schedule despite a three-week shutdown due to Hurricane Ida. *BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS*

LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards LLC has delivered the newest Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter (FRC), the USCGC John Scheuerman, to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida, nearly a week ahead of schedule despite a three-week

shutdown due to the significant damage sustained to Bollinger's facilities during Hurricane Ida, the company said Oct. 21.

The storm made landfall in late August near Port Fourchon, Louisiana, as a powerful Category 4 storm. Bollinger's facilities in Port Fourchon, Lockport, Houma and Larose suffered significant damage as a result of Hurricane Ida, which tied with last year's Hurricane Laura and the Last Island Hurricane of 1856 as the strongest on record in Louisiana.

"While every delivery is meaningful, being able to deliver this vessel nearly a week early despite everything our crew has faced over the past month is nothing short of remarkable," said Bollinger President & CEO Ben Bordelon. "We had folks who lost everything in that storm. Our yard where we build the FRCs took a beating and was shuttered for three weeks while we rebuilt. This vessel and this delivery is a win our folks really needed and it reflects the resilience, commitment and tenacity of the 650 skilled men and women that built it."

On Sept. 24, following an extensive multi-week recovery and rebuilding effort, Bollinger welcomed employees back to all 11 of its facilities across Louisiana. USCGC John Scheuerman departed Lockport Oct. 11 for Bollinger's Fourchon facility, where it performed a shakedown exercise before dry docking for final inspection in preparation of its delivery. The cutter departed Fourchon for Key West Oct. 17.

The USCGC John Scheuerman is the 169th vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 46th FRC delivered under the current program. The USCGC John Scheuerman is the fifth of six FRCs to be home-ported in Manama, Bahrain, which will replace the aging 110-foot Island-class patrol boats, built by Bollinger Shipyards 30 years ago, supporting the Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA), the U.S. Coast Guard's largest overseas presence

outside the United States.

U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz has previously lauded the "enhanced seakeeping capabilities" of the PATFORSWA-bound FRCs, saying the ships are going to be "game changing" in their new theater of operations. Last week, at the commissioning ceremony for the USCGC Emlen Tunnell – another Bahrain-based FRC – Schultz said these ships will "conduct maritime security operations, theater cooperation efforts, and strengthen partner nations' maritime capabilities to promote security and stability in the region, as well as thwart the increasingly aggressive and dangerous maritime activities of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps."

NAVSEA Awards SAFE Boats $90 Million Contract for Six Mk VI Patrol Boats

A Mark VI patrol boat participates in the bilateral Mine Countermeasures Exercise 2020 (MCMEX 20) with the mine countermeasures ship USS Gladiator (MCM 11) in the Arabian Gulf, March 28, 2020. *U.S. ARMY / Pfc. Christopher Cameron*

BREMERTON, Wash. – SAFE Boats International has been awarded a $90 million firm-fixed-price modification to a previously awarded contract for design, construction, outfitting, reactivation, and training for six Mk VI Patrol Boats with an option for two additional vessels, the company said in a release.

This Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) contract will provide Mk VI Patrol Boats to Ukraine via a U.S. State Department-

approved agreement utilizing Building Partner Capacity and Foreign Military Financing funds. Work will be performed in Washington State and SAFE Boats expects to increase their workforce by creating up to 75 new positions, primarily at their Tacoma facility. Final delivery on the contract is slated for March 2025, or March 2026 if the option for additional vessels is exercised.

“This award is the culmination of hard work and collaboration by the SAFE Boats Team, our supply chain partners, and the U..S government,” said Richard Schwarz, CEO of SAFE Boats International. “We are excited to be part of this important program and to have the opportunity to expand our workforce; no small feat in our current economy.”

Propelled by HamiltonJet waterjets and twin, 2,600 horsepower, MTU 16V 2000 series diesel engines (5,200 horsepower total), the eighty-five-foot-long Mk VI Patrol Boat has a range of 600-plus nautical miles, a cruising speed of more than 25 knots with a sprint speed of more than 35 knots, and a draft of 4.5 feet, making it ideal for littoral operations.

MCSC Begins Fielding Amphibious Robot System for Littoral Missions

Sgt. Tyler Joles, an explosive ordnance disposal technician from Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization Platoon, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, controls a remotely operated vehicle with a human machine interface during a demonstration in San Diego, California,

Oct. 6. The ROV asset aids the Marine Corps in naval force integration by giving Marines the capabilities to work alongside Navy EOD. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Kristy Ordonez Maldonado*

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – In September, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) began fielding an amphibious, unmanned robot system to support littoral operations globally. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Remotely Operated Vehicle is a next-generation, box-shaped robot that enables Marines to navigate safely and efficiently in shallow waters to identify and neutralize explosive hazards and other threats.

“This robot gives Marines eyes in the water,” said Master Sgt. Patrick Hilty, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal project officer at MCSC. “It is a capability the Marine Corps has never before had.”

The ROV employs sound navigation and ranging sensors, a high-definition video capability and cameras that provide real-time feedback for EOD divers. It includes an articulator arm that helps Marines maneuver through underwater foliage or neutralize explosive threats.

“It is a system that saves Marine divers from having to swim hundreds of meters, an activity that can tire them out,” Hilty said.

Marines can use the robot for various amphibious missions. For example, they can leverage the ROV to search harbors before docking a Marine Expeditionary Unit ship. Operators can use it for activities in very shallow waters, conducting littoral lost object searches, damage assessments and mine countermeasure missions.

Hilty applauded the ROV’s tether feature, which keeps EOD technicians at a safe distance from explosive hazards. Before the capability, Marine divers could only disrupt or dispose underwater explosive threats by swimming in close proximity, exposing them to hostile elements.

“The ROV gives us a remote means to search underwater while also helping us stay at our best when having to prosecute explosive devices,” Hilty said.

Master Sgt. Matthew Jackson, a staff non-commissioned officer in charge of 1st EOD Company’s Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization section, said the ROV is highly stable in an underwater environment. He noted how the machine requires minimal equipment and reduces the Marine Corps’ overall footprint during operations.

“This intuitive system has the ability to complete critical underwater tasks much deeper than manned missions can,” Jackson said. “The ROV will serve as an important capability to support our tasks.”

Jackson also praised the system for its ease of use. He said it requires minimal training compared with other unmanned underwater systems. This ultimately saves the Marine Corps time and money required for training.

“Instead of sending a Marine to a course for seven or eight weeks, it takes about four days to learn basic operations for successful employment,” Jackson said.

The ROV also supports naval integration. In 2019, the Navy acquired this commercial off-the-shelf capability. The service conducted a series of tests to determine its viability for EOD missions. These tests included reliability and maintenance evaluations to test its effectiveness and ease of employment during simulated activities.

“Testing conducted by the Navy allowed us to field this capability to Marines more quickly,” Hilty said. “Additionally, the Marine Corps and Navy both having this system increases interoperability among the services.”

The robot is the first increment in the Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization (LEON) Family of Systems. This series

of robotic capabilities will allow Marines to search a wider area in the littorals, including the very shallow water, surf and beach zones. LEON systems, to be fielded gradually by MCSC over the next several years, will also help the Marine Corps complement Navy EOD teams in joint operations as it strives to evolve naval force integration in the future.

“Having this capability aids in naval force integration by giving us the same equipment that the Navy is using,” said Staff Sgt. Seth Barnes, EOD Technician with 1st EOD Company. “It allows us to bolt on with Navy EOD as we move forward.”

Achieving Force Design 2030 remains an ongoing, concerted effort for the Marine Corps, as repeatedly stated by Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David Berger. This goal requires the acquisition of nextgeneration, unmanned systems, like the ROV, to support Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations.

“We’re bringing the EABO concept to the modern day,” said Ronald Diefenbach, a program analyst on the Explosive Hazard Team at MCSC. “Adhering to this concept, we can use the ROV to support Marines when operating from the littorals and while conducting island-hopping tasks.”

Hilty said the Marine Corps has never before leveraged waters for missions. In the past, Marines would begin operations from land, typically a beach. This new concept requires a shift in the paradigm in how the Marine Corps operates. Fielding capabilities that conform to the vision to support an evolving naval fight will ultimately support the present and future Marine.

“We’ve always done this piece via the Navy,” said Hilty. “Now that the Marine Corps is doing it, we are learning valuable skillsets, becoming much better-rounded and proving to be a bigger asset to the MAGTF [Marine Air-Ground Task Force].”